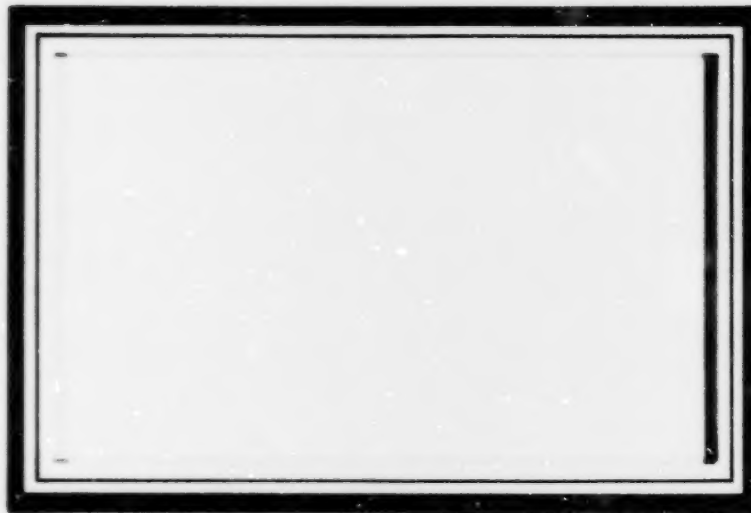


POLICY DOCUMENTATION



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FCM

Federation of
Canadian
Municipalities
Fédération
canadienne des
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**Task Force
On
Crime Prevention
Policy Statement**

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FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES
POLICY STATEMENT
ON
CRIME PREVENTION

A National Philosophy For The Creation
Of A Stronger, Safer Community Life
In Canada

CRIME PREVENTION: AN ISSUE FOR MUNICIPALITIES

The prevention of crime in our communities must become a priority in the planning and activities of local authorities. The essence of crime prevention is the fostering of the active involvement of Canadians in maintaining peace and security in their communities.

Crime cannot be solved by longer prison sentences, by the judiciary or by more police. Its best chance at solution is through an interministry approach, an emphasis on crime prevention, a realization that it is the responsibility of the whole range of statutory and voluntary agencies and the public themselves. (Manchester Guardian Weekly, May 15, 1983.)

By its nature, crime prevention must involve every sector of the community, every order of government, every sphere of private enterprise and each and every citizen.

OPTIONS: THE ROLE OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

As the order of government "closest to the people" with a general responsibility for maintaining peace, order

and good government at the local level, Canadian municipalities are rightly interested in all efforts to secure the well-being of their communities. They are particularly well positioned to develop and facilitate innovative means to engage their citizens in programs and activities which will promote law enforcement and crime prevention at the community level.

Many municipalities, especially the larger ones, have taken a variety of initiatives to encourage citizen participation.

At another level of consideration, the role of municipal governments in law enforcement and crime prevention takes on an even greater significance. They can be the vehicle for maintaining a social consensus on the legitimacy of the law.

Laws are simply a community's rules for governing behaviour. For this reason, laws, and the institutions assigned to enforce them, do not guarantee social order in themselves. Rather, it is the willingness of citizens to respect the law and conform in their actions to the law - however they may disagree with particular laws - that secures order in the community. While the final recourse of the community is force, it is not the case that order is maintained through the continuous threat of the use of force. Laws are obeyed because people generally regard them as legitimate.

While not being autonomous law-making bodies in their own right, as are the federal and provincial governments and, while being the recipient of the laws of these other orders of government, municipal governments are in a position to encourage respect for the law and a greater sense of individual responsibility. Municipal councils and

municipal police departments along with other enforcement agencies can be very much more than passive instruments for enforcing the law as it is made by other orders of government. They can be the active and creative linkage between law and the citizen, thereby playing a major role in maintaining respect for the law, reinforcing the principle of the rule of law, bringing about changes in the law and allowing citizens to assume greater responsibility for maintaining order in their communities.

Additionally, our municipalities are instrumental in bringing local sensitivity to the enforcement of the law, and in so doing helping promote a national consensus which is essential for the maintenance of law and order in the community as a whole. This is particularly important in a country characterized by cultural diversity, different lifestyles and regional differences.

It is in this context that municipal governments may be seen to have a major role in crime prevention, many municipalities have recognized this role and evidenced a wide array of innovative policies and programs which have been implemented over the last several years.

MUNICIPALITIES AND THE FEDERAL INITIATIVE

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities welcomes and endorses efforts such as those initiated by the federal Solicitor General to establish a long-term national crime prevention program based on community participation. This should do much to enhance and improve upon local efforts in the promotion of law and order across Canada. These initiatives are welcomed also as a way to encourage public support for "pro-active" policing concepts, making it easier for elected officials in all orders of government to provide the funds necessary for a wide variety of innovative approaches to crime prevention.

The current Ministry of the Solicitor General has been involved in crime prevention for several years. The new initiatives represent an important step forward to give crime prevention a broader basis of community support and involvement, a clearer structure within which to coordinate the efforts within and among the three orders of government and a stronger, more clearly articulated philosophy. While efforts in the past have been primarily directed at and implemented through the efforts of our police forces, now the Ministry would like to see crime prevention efforts include the community and, where appropriate, other groups, government departments and organizations in order to develop a more comprehensive approach to crime prevention.

There is a new appreciation that crime prevention, if it is to be successful, must include concern about factors of a broad social nature. More attention must be given to those matters which affect and contribute to a social environment in which citizens are able to enjoy a decent quality of life, reasonable opportunity to pursue their individual aspirations and a sense of fairness in law enforcement.

From this perspective, crime prevention is viewed as involving very much more than the imposition of institutional control and stronger means of law enforcement. While the latter are important they are "reactive" by nature. It is by placing crime prevention in the broader context of social policy that it becomes possible to consider opportunities for "pro-active" approaches to crime prevention.

It is in this context that crime prevention comes to involve more than the implementation of measures to control human behaviour through an expansion and extension of law enforcement activities and/or efforts to strengthen the

deterrent function of the law. By placing crime in a social context, it is possible to identify its causes and to develop ways to eliminate or ameliorate the social conditions which encourage criminal activity in the first place. In this way, the idea of prevention takes on a positive meaning and reinforces the importance of community involvement.

Such involvement means that the citizen becomes very much more than the extension of law enforcement activities. The citizen assumes responsibility for influencing the development and implementation of social policies designed to encourage respect for the law, and for dealing directly and positively with the root of social causes of criminal activity in the community. In this way the responsibility for securing the conditions for order is returned to the community itself.

The basis of the federal initiative is a conviction that more policies, more equipment, courts and jails are not the solution to the prevention of crime. The emphasis has to be on programs that contribute to the quality of Canadian life, and bring crime prevention considerations into social policy-making areas in such fields as health, education and the economy.

THE MUNICIPAL PERSPECTIVE

The Ministry approach is not new to municipal governments and their law enforcement agencies. In fact, many elected representatives and senior law enforcement officers have pressed strongly over the years for federal leadership of the kind exhibited in the Ministry's new crime prevention initiatives. At the local level, the future of crime prevention, based on community participation, is viewed as very bright and promising.

It has been argued that the next major change in the development of community crime prevention programs will be based on reinforcing the principles of self-help and citizen involvement. There is increasing interest among municipal police departments in reorganizing their activities to use networking techniques to activate existing community groups, public and private institutions and commercial interests. In times of financial restraint, departments are adopting the role of a catalyst with existing groups and organizations. The purpose is to spread the crime prevention message through existing communication channels with the support of community groups.

Elected representatives and senior law enforcement officials also welcome federal leadership in efforts to encourage coordination of governmental activities and decisions both within and among the three orders of government, and between government and various groups and organization in both the voluntary and private sectors.

This new philosophical direction implied in the Ministry's approach is viewed by a number of senior law enforcement officers and elected officials as crucial to the successful implementation of crime prevention programs. It adds an essential dimension to crime prevention which is regarded as long overdue, not only municipally, but in other orders of government as well. The need for a "national statement" to establish a philosophical orientation towards crime prevention is considered a prerequisite for successful crime prevention programs. A number of individuals have expressed frustration about the lack of commitment to and understanding of "pro-active concepts" in the political realm. It has been observed that "This short-sightedness has made it difficult for police to convey the message in terms of adequate financing and endorsement." At the same time, law enforcement officers

have been equally critical of the "short-sightedness" that exists with the police community itself.

It has been observed that police managers in some cases have been trying to emphasize crime prevention as an integral approach in police activities but they have been meeting resistance from all levels of the police community. The new initiatives will undoubtedly influence those quarters that are exhibiting resistance, and the whole approach will come to be viewed less as a frill to be lopped off in preliminary budget cutting.

Politically, there is the tendency for elected representatives to give priority to those activities which have a tangible nature in the sense that there is an observable and quantifiable relationship between money spent and concrete actions, resources and results. Value for money is measured on the basis of the number of policemen on the beat, the number of patrol cars on the street, the number of cases solved, the number of criminals caught and so on.

What makes a program politically acceptable and justifiable is results that can be seen and quantified. This is understandable and an important element in assessing the value of a program(s). It also conforms with the way in which many law officers evaluate the worth and effectiveness of their activities, and assess the value of crime prevention efforts. Political and professional needs and expectations coalesce at this level, and conform with the public's sense of what justifies public expenditures. Nevertheless, this is only one aspect of crime prevention.

The less tangible, and largely non-quantifiable aspects of "pro-active concepts" in the social policy area are not as easy to justify politically, nor are they

readily understood or supported within the professional perspective of many law enforcement officers. Even so, these concepts are an essential ingredient of crime prevention, especially with regard to the creation of a social environment which addresses the causes of crime and nurtures a respect for the law.

It is precisely for the above reason that the kind of philosophical direction exhibited by the current Solicitor General is regarded as an important step forward. It is hoped that such leadership will assist in generating commitment to and support for crime prevention on the basis of greater knowledge and understanding among elected representatives, law enforcement officers and citizens, of those actions and decisions which, while not easily quantified, are essential for creating a social environment conducive to peace and security for all citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the foregoing, the Task Force on Crime Prevention recommends that the FCM:

1. endorse those federal programs which promote community involvement in crime prevention and, specifically, support the federal ministry of the Solicitor General's Crime Prevention Week and Awards Program;
2. continue to be represented on the federal Solicitor General's Advisory Committee on Crime Prevention and Canadians for Crime Prevention Committee;
3. assist in the development of a national program for deterring crime based on the involvement of the three orders of government, the private sector, voluntary groups and organizations and citizens;

4. appoint members of its National Board of Directors to act as liaison with the Solicitor General's Department with each province and territory having one representative;
5. delegate responsibility for consultative activities with national law enforcement organizations to the FCM Task Force on Crime Prevention, and that such consultations include the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and Police Associations;
6. work with national organizations having an interest in and a commitment to crime prevention; for example, Canadian Association for the Prevention of Crime, Canadian Bar Association, Canadian Labour Congress, Canadian Chamber of Commerce;
7. work with various national social agencies, native groups, churches and faith groups, and professional associations active in criminal justice and crime prevention matters; for example, Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded, Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, Canadian Association of Native Court Workers, Canadian Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Church Council on Justice and Corrections, Salvation Army, John Howard Society of Canada;
8. publicize and promote the importance of crime prevention and the role of municipal governments and law enforcement agencies in crime prevention programs based on community participation;
9. provide assistance with advice to federal, provincial and municipal governments in the development, coordination and implementation of crime prevention policies and programs;
10. develop and maintain an information book of crime prevention policies and programs that have been implemented both in Canada and other countries;

11. disseminate information about crime prevention policies and programs;
12. publicize and promote the importance of "pro-active" policing concepts and the development of social policy at the municipal level, for the success of crime prevention programs;
13. promote awareness among elected officials in all orders of government of the importance of crime prevention activities and programs of the federal and provincial as well as municipal police departments and other agencies;
14. encourage the interest and support of the private sector in crime prevention programs in light of benefits with respect to both economic and corporate image.